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UNCLAS ABUJA 002039

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF, CA, DS
DOT FOR OIA, ALSO FAA
DAKAR FOR FAA EDWARD JONES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CASC](#) [EAIR](#) [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [NI](#) [BELLVIEW](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA REQUESTS U.S. ASSISTANCE IN INVESTIGATING
BELLVIEW AIRLINES' FATAL CRASH

REF: A. ABUJA 2032 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. LAGOS 1648 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)1. (U) This cable contains an action request. Please see paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (U) The Government of Nigeria (GON) requested in a letter dated Oct. 24 technical assistance from the U.S. Government in investigating the Oct. 22 crash of a Bellview Airlines Boeing 737 about 30 km north of Lagos. According to press reports, all of the flight's six crew members and all 111 passengers were killed. The victims included the chief of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC). The cause of the crash is not known.

[1](#)3. (U) The letter (ref B), which was signed by F.C. Onyeyiri, director general of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, is inspecific and contains only two substantive paragraphs. The letter's main point notes the GON wishes "to formally request for technical assistance in our determined effort to move the aviation industry forward especially in the light of the recent accident involving a Boeing 737 aircraft in our country."

[1](#)4. (SBU) The GON's rescue efforts following the plane crash were poorly coordinated, contradictory, and chaotic. The GON also did not initially maintain security at or safeguard the crash site.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Embassy Abuja requests that the Department and U.S. transportation and safety agencies interpret as broadly as possible Nigeria's request for help, to include assistance in the areas of forensic and accident investigation. This also will aid the U.S. Mission Nigeria in securing the remains of its ODC commander. Embassy Abuja continues to provide support and assistance to the family of its deceased ODC chief.

CAMPBELL